

Hartford and New Haven Railroad, Freight Depot
40 Central Street
Windsor
Hartford County
Connecticut

HAER No. CT-23-B

HAER
CONN
2-WIND,
7-B-

PHOTOGRAPHS

WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

HISTORIC AMERICAN ENGINEERING RECORD
MID-ATLANTIC REGION, NATIONAL PARK SERVICE
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
PHILADELPHIA, PENNSYLVANIA 19106

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Hartford and New Haven Railroad, Freight Depot

HAER No. CT-23-B

Location: 40 Central Street
Town of Windsor, Hartford County, Connecticut

UTM: 18.695720.4635780
Quad: Hartford North

Date of Construction: c. 1865

Present Owner: National Railroad Passenger Corporation (AMTRAK)
400 North Capitol Street, NW
Washington, D. C. 20001

Present Use: Vacant

Significance: With its simple form, this building provides a typical example of 19th century utilitarian architecture. There are, however, subtle details which allow it to complement surrounding buildings such as the more elaborate passenger depot (HAER No. CT-23-A) located across the tracks.

Project Information
Statement: This project was undertaken in November 1985 as a mitigative measure as required by the Urban Mass Transportation Administration, prior to the rehabilitation of the buildings. Alterations include the removal of sliding doors, interior partitions, and freight scale.

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Transmitted by: Jean P. Yearby, HAER, 1986

PART I. HISTORICAL INFORMATION

A. Physical History:

1. Date of erection: The exact date of construction has not been determined. The Town of Windsor Historic Survey estimated the date of construction to be circa 1865.¹ This date was based on the author's stylistic assessment of the building.
2. Architect: Not known.
3. Original and subsequent owners:
 - 1847 The Hartford and Springfield Railroad merged with the Hartford and New Haven Railroad, retaining the name of the latter.²
 - 1872 The Hartford and New Haven Railroad merged with the New York and New Haven Railroad and became the New York, New Haven and Hartford Railroad.²
 - 1969 The New York, New Haven and Hartford Railroad Company was taken over by the Penn Central Company.³ The Penn Central Railroad eventually declared bankruptcy. At that point, Amtrak was formed to operate a national passenger service.
4. Builder, contractor, supplier: Not known.
5. Original plans and construction: Original plans have not been located.
6. Alterations and additions: There appears to be no major alterations to the facility. At some point subsequent to the original construction, the east elevation was taken down, thereby allowing trucks to back up directly to the building.

¹ Maynard, Preston C., "The Town of Windsor Historic Survey." 1981, Town of Windsor Press, Hartford, item 52.

² Weller, John L. "The New Haven Railroad, its rise and fall," unpublished, p. 6.

³ Town of Windsor Land Records, Book 217, p. 597.

- B. Historical Context: The Hartford and Springfield Railroad began service through Windsor in December 1844. At that time, a depot was built on the site. In May 1847, the Hartford and Springfield Railroad merged with the Hartford and New Haven, retaining the latter name. The original depot was replaced with the current passenger building in 1871. It was during this period that the freight depot was built. An 1869 map shows a building on this site. It could be the current freight depot or the former depot that was razed for the current building. In 1872, the Hartford and New Haven Railroad merged with the New York and New Haven Railroad, forming the New York, New Haven and Hartford Railroad. This merger created the largest and most powerful railroad in New England.

The railroad stop in Windsor Center was a major factor in the extensive residential and commercial development which took place during this period. The railroad claimed that it was a 12-minute train ride from Windsor to Hartford, making it an easy commute for Hartford businessmen as well as an efficient way to ship goods.

PART II. ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION

A. General Statement:

1. This building has a simple form typical of 19th century utilitarian commercial architecture. There is a Gothic influence to the building, which is reflected in its vertical details, its proportionately narrow width, and exposed rafter ends and purlins.
2. Condition of fabric: Since this building was used as a warehouse until approximately 1982, a minimal amount of maintenance has been put into the property. This has resulted in moderate deterioration of the structure.

B. Description of Exterior:

1. Overall dimensions: This building is rectangular in shape. It is one story in height and has no basement. The structure's dimensions are 28'9" (north and south elevations) x 112'6" (east and west elevations). In addition, buttresses protrude an additional 6" on the east and west sides. Three buttresses delineate 11 bays on each side.
2. Foundation: The foundation walls, which are approximately 2' thick, are constructed of ashlar brownstone cut with a rock-face. The top course on the north side has a smooth-cut face. This texture provided more of a finished look since this surface was not obscured by a platform.

3. Wall construction: The walls are constructed with red brick laid in seven course English bonding. Walls are three bricks or 11-1/2-inches thick. Brick dimensions are 7-1/2" x 3-1/2" x 2-1/4". Pointing is fairly sound, although there are individual areas which require attention.
4. Structural systems, framing: The structural system in the exterior walls is load-bearing masonry. Interior partitions and floor joists are wood frame. There is a roof system which provides a clear space, eliminating the need for interior columns. Exterior buttresses support the truss system and a canopy roof which covered the loading platforms.
5. Porches, stoops, balconies, bulkheads: There is evidence that a canopy roof covered the loading platforms on the east and west sides. The roof and a major of the platform have been removed. Only a small section of the track side loading platform remains.
6. Chimneys: There is one small interior chimney on the north wall which provided venting for a woodstove in the freight office. It has simple corbelling. It is in very bad condition and several bricks are missing.
7. Openings:
 - a. Doorways and doors: There are nine freight doorways in the building; five on the east side, one on the south side and three on the west (track) side. Each doorway is 7'4" wide and has a segmental arch brick lintel. Each door slides along a track inside the building and is constructed of beaded tongue and groove boards installed diagonally. There are two service doorways in the northwest corner of the building, one each on the north and east sides. The west side doorway has a brownstone lintel and a wood threshold opening onto a small wooden utilitarian porch which is in an advanced state of disrepair. The north doorway has a brownstone lintel and sill. A gabled hood is supported by simple curved metal brackets. The stairs for this door is missing. The north door remains, although it is severely damaged. It features two recessed wood panels below two panels of glass.
 - b. Windows and shutters: There are window openings in the northwest corner, 1 each on the north and west sides. Each has a brownstone lintel and sill. The sash are six over six, light double hung type.

There are two oculus windows in the north gable end and one in the south gable end. The north windows are approximately 3'6" in diameter, while the south example is 4'6" in diameter. The muntin bars in each window project out from a center hub to create a sash with the appearance of a spoked wheel. The south sash has 13 lights, while those to the north each have nine.

8. Roof:

- a. Shape, covering: This building has a gable roof with a moderately steep pitch. The roofing material is grey slate. Several slates are missing or broken. The peak has a clay or terra cotta cap.
- b. Cornices, eaves: The eaves are open with exposed rafter ends and purlins in the gable ends. The purlin ends are rounded.
- c. Dormers, cupolas, towers: There are five sections on each roof slope which have rectangular patches, indicating that there were skylights or dormers at one point.

C. Description of Interior:

1. Floor plans: The overall interior dimensions are 110'3" x 26'3". This was all open space originally used for freight storage except for the freight office which is built into the northwest corner. The office is 20'6" x 16'10". The building is one story with no basement.
2. Stairway: There are no interior staircases.
3. Flooring: The flooring, typical of commercial buildings from this period, is wood boards 2" thick x 6" wide. It is unfinished.
4. Wall and ceiling finish: The walls and ceiling of the main area are both unfinished, exposing the exterior brick walls and the roof truss system. The walls and ceiling in the freight office are constructed of tongue and groove boards typically used for wainscoting or paneling. The walls are capped with a crown moulding.
5. Openings:
 - a. Doorways and doors: The freight office has two exterior doorways and one interior doorway (leading to the main room). The casings are small and moulded in the office. On the warehouse side of the office wall, they are flush boards. One exterior door exists which has two recessed wood panels on the bottom and two glass panels on the top. The interior door is missing.

The nine freight doors slide along metal tracks into a slot created by vertical wooden slats. This is to prevent freight from being placed in the path of any of the doors. The inside of the doors are constructed of horizontal flush boards.

- b. Windows: The freight office has three windows, two exterior and one interior (facing the warehouse). The casings are the same as those on the doors. The sash is six over six light double hung type.

There is no trim on the oculus window.

Evidence in the form of 10 evenly-spaced rectangular patches on the roof (five on each slope), suggests that there were skylights or dormer windows providing natural light to the warehouse.

- 6. Decorative features and trim: Being a utilitarian structure, there are no notable decorative features on the interior.
- 7. Hardware: There is a highly decorative scale which was used to weigh freight. A large platform on the floor is where the item to be weight would be placed. The weights and slide bars are supported by a frame comprised of two fluted doric columns and an entablature with a plain frieze and a moulded cornice.
- 8. Mechanical equipment:
 - a. Heating, airconditioning, ventilation: There is a chimney in the north wall which provided a hook-up for a woodstove in the office. This appears to be the only source of heat for the building. Three louvered square ventilators on the roof provide ventilation for the building.
 - b. Lighting: There are early electric fixtures, specifically baked enamel shallow dish reflectors hanging from the ceiling and over the doors on the exterior. There is no evidence of what earlier lighting may have existed.
- 9. Original furnishings: There are no original furnishings in the building.

D. Site:

1. General setting and orientation: The primary facade (facing the tracks) has a compass orientation to the east. The actual site contains two buildings, the passenger depot as described in HAER No. CT-23-A and the freight depot as described in this document. These two buildings sit diagonally from each other, across the intersection of the tracks and Central Avenue.

The structures in the general vicinity of the site are used either for commercial or industrial purposes.

2. Historic landscape design: There is no planned landscaping around the building.
3. The only other building on the site is the passenger depot which is described in HAER No. CT-23-A.

PART III. SOURCES OF INFORMATION

- A. Architectural drawing: Original drawings have not been located. There is a drawing from 1915 (included on page 9) which shows the main floor plan and elevation. The current alteration plans, prepared in 1985, are on file at the Windsor Town Hall.
- B. Historic views: No historic views have been located.
- C. Interviews: No interviews were conducted.
- D. Bibliography:
 1. Primary and unpublished sources:
 - a. Clerk's Office, Town of Windsor, "Windsor Land Records," Vol. 43, unpublished.
 - b. Tax Assessor's office, Town of Windsor, Tax Assessment Records, unpublished, 1969.
 2. Secondary and published sources:
 - a. Stiles, Henry R., "The History of Ancient Windsor," Vol. 1, 1905. Reprint. Somerset: The New Hampshire Publishing Company, 1976.

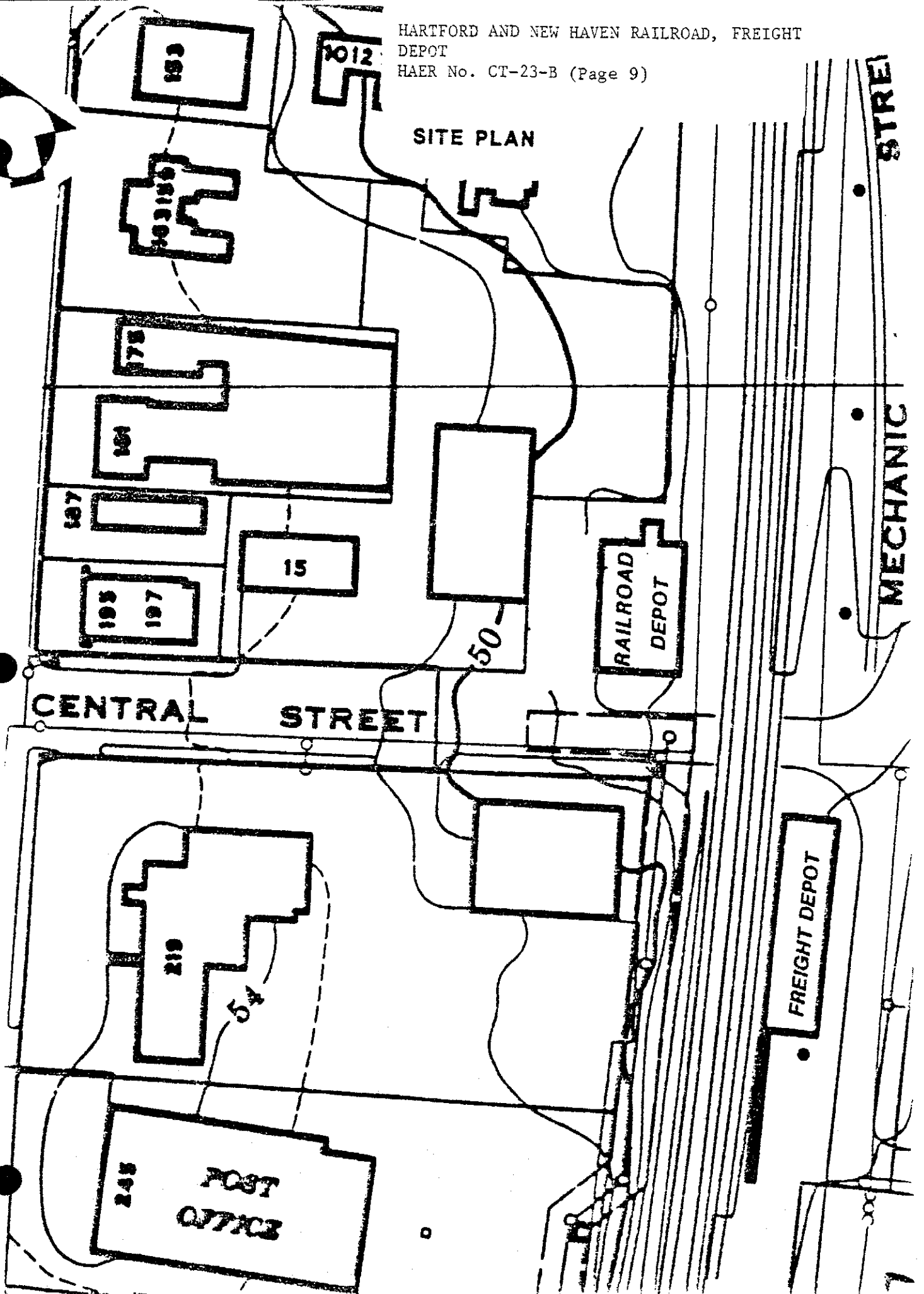
- b. Maynard, Preston C., "Town of Windsor, Historic Survey," Windsor: Town of Windsor Press, 1982.
- c. Weller, John L. "The New Haven Railroad, its rise and fall," Ph.D. dissertation, University of Ohio, no date.
- d. State of Connecticut General Railroad Commission. The Eighteenth Annual Report of the General Railroad Commission of the State of Connecticut for 1871." Hartford: The Press of Case, Lockwood and Brainard, 1871.
- e. Goodman, Don, "A Reminder of Another Era," The Windsor Journal, Vol. 7, Number 2, September 13, 1979, page 1.
- f. Anonymous. "Windsor and The Railroad," The Windsor News-Weekly, Vol. unknown, April 4, 1947, page unknown.

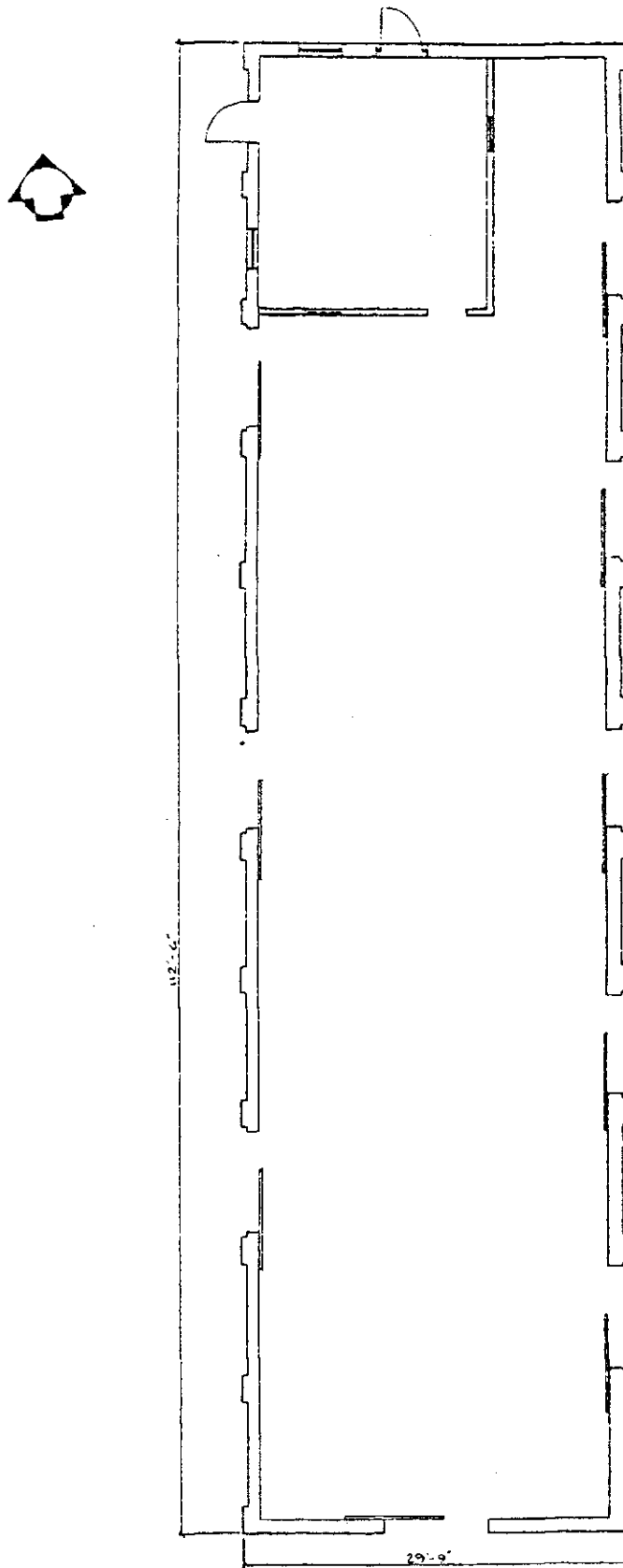
E. Likely Sources Not Yet Investigated:

- 1. Connecticut Historical Society, Hartford, Connecticut
- 2. Connecticut State Library, Hartford, Connecticut

F. Supplemental Material: None known.

SITE PLAN





FLOORPLAN